owing to concealment of material facts cannot be ruled out completely. However, when such a lapse is detected, suitable penal action including cancellation of the selection/allotment is taken against such applicants.

पेट्रोल/डीजल पम्पों के आबंटन हेतु साक्षात्कार में विलम्ब

4352. **श्री जगन्नाथ सिंह:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि दो वर्ष पूर्व पैट्रोल/डीजल की एजेंसियों हेतु आवेदन पत्र आमंत्रित किए गए थे, और

(ख) यदि हां, तो अब तक साक्षात्कार हेतु तिथि निर्धारित नहीं किए जाने के क्या कारण हैं?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री टी०आर० बालु): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) अप्रैल, 1996 से तेल चयन बोर्डों का कार्यचालन आस्थगित कर दिया गया था तथा बाद में भारत सरकार ने तेल चयन बोर्डों के अध्यक्षों और सदस्यों का कार्यकाल 05.03.97 को समाप्त कर दिया था। तेल चयन बोर्डों की अनुपस्थिति में कोई साक्षात्कार निर्धारित नहीं किए जा सके।

Oil Selection Boards

4353. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of Oil Selection Boards which are functioning at present, alongwith the number of LPG dealerships and petrol pumps allotted by each, since July, 1996;

(b) whether Government have decided to abolish them and to formulted new policy for the award of dealership in petroleum products and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the interest of the weaker sections of society is proposed to be safeguarded in the new proposed norms and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Functioning of the Oil Selection Boards was kept in abeyance from April 1996, because of the General Elections to the Lok Sabha. Subsequently, tenure of the Chairmen and Memebrs of the Boards was terminated on March 5, 1997. In view of this, on selection was made by these Boards since then.

Government has recently revised the policy guidelines for selection of dealers/distributors for petroleum products. Salient features of the revised gudelines are as under:

(I) Reservation for different sections of the Society has been broad based as under:

(i)	Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SC/ ST)	-25%
(ii)	Physically Handicapped (PH)	- 5%
(iii)	Defence Personnel (DC)	- 8%
(iv)	Paramilitary/Police/ Government Personnel (PMP)	- 8%
(v)	Freedm Fighters (FF)	- 2%
(vi)	Outstanding Sportspersons (OSP)	- 2%
(vii)	Open (O)	- 50%

(II) For the first time, 30% of the dealerships/distributorships have been reserved for women in each of the categories mentioned above.

(III) Multiple dealership norms have been simplifed. In order to ensure that dealerships/distributorships are not concentrated within the same family, it has been provided in the policy that no person shall be awarded new dealerships/distributorship if he/she or any of his/her close relatives (including step relatives) as given below already holds a Letter of Intent or dealership/distributorship of petrol/diesel/LPG/Kerosene/Light Diesel Oil of any oil company:

Other than HP category	PH category
(i) Spouse	(i) Spouse
(ii) Father/Mother	(ii) Father/Mother
(iii) Brother/Brother's wife (Not applicable for women applicants)	(iii) Son/Daughter-in-Law
(iv) Son/daughter-in-law	

(IV) Income ceiling for eligibility has been raised from Rs. 50,000/-per annum to Rs. 2 lacs per annum.

(V) Maximum age limit in the applicable categories has been raised from 50 years to 60 years.

(VI) Selection of dealers/distributors will be made by duly constituted Dealer Selection Boards comprising:

(i) A retired Judge of a High Court —Chairman
(ii) An officer not below the rank of Dy. GM of—Member the concerned Oil Company.
(iii) An officer not below the rank of Dy. GM of—Member another Oil Company.

Slippage of Major Exploration Chances

4354. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the pioneer dated the 10th February, 1997, under the caption "India lets slip major exploration chances"; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposals submitted to the Ministry of Financy by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas during 1996 and how many proposals have since been cleared and the reasons for not clearing the remaining projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) A proposal from ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) for joint exploration with Ensearch of USA was under examination in cosnultation with the Ministry of Finance and other concerned Ministries but the proposal has since been withdrawn. No other proposal from OVL was taken up with the Minister of Finance in 1996.

Money Spent on Oil Exploration During Eighth Five Year Plan

4355. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
HARIBHAI SHUKLA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the States, including Gujarat, where any survey has been conducted under oil exploration programme during the Eighth Five Year Plan period;

(b) the total amount spent on oil exploration during the same period;